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EDITH CAVELL





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EDITH CAVELL.

EDITH CAVELL

HER LIFE STORY

A Norfolk Tribute



By HERBERT LEEDS

Author of "The Life of Dean Le/roy"

"Abide with me; fast falls the eventide."

LONDON
JARROLD & SONS

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ROYAL TRIBUTES.

THE following letters were received by Mrs. Cavell, mother of Nurse Cavell:—

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,

Oct. 23, 1915.

DEAR MADAM,

By command of the King and Queen I write to assure you that the hearts of their Majesties go out to you in your bitter sorrow, and to express their horror at the appalling deed which has robbed you of your child. Men and women throughout the civilised world, while sympathising with you, are moved with admiration and awe at her faith and courage in death.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Yours very truly,

STAMFORDHAM.

SANDRINGHAM RECTORY.

I am commanded by her Majesty Queen Alexandra to write and say how deeply her Majesty feels for you in the sad and tragic death of your daughter. Her Majesty views the unheard-of act with the utmost abhorrence ; no words of mine are in any way adequate to express the deep feelings of her Majesty as she spoke to me of Miss Cavell's death. Her Majesty's first thought was of you, and I was to tell you how deeply, very deeply, her Majesty sympathises with you. " Her poor, poor mother, I go on thinking of her," were her Majesty's words. The women of England are bearing the greatest burden of this terrible war, but by all the name of Miss Cavell will be held in the highest honour and respect. We shall always remember that she never once failed England in her hour of need. May God bless and comfort you is the prayer of her Majesty.

A. R. GRANT,
Rector of Sandringham.

EDITH CAVELL.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

EDITH CAVELL was born on December 4th, 1865, at Swardeston, a pleasant little country parish four miles south of Norwich, where her father, the Rev. Frederick Cavell, was vicar. Previous to his appointment there, he was curate of St. Mark's, Tollington Park, and before that held a similar position at St. Mary's, Islington. At the time he came to Swardeston, no real vicarage existed. The living was in the gift of the owner of the East Carleton and Swardeston estates, and the vicar of Swardeston had been in the habit of occupying an old farmhouse near the village common, that was placed at his disposal by the patron. This was a roomy building with some fine elm trees standing in its grounds. Here it was that Edith Cavell was born.

A few years after Mr. Cavell decided to erect a vicarage proper, which he did out of his own private income, and with assistance from Queen Anne's Bounty. The undertaking imposed a considerable burden on his financial resources, for the living in itself was a poor one.

Edith Cavell received her early education at home. She was an apt pupil, with marked tastes and noble ambitions. Even in those days she gave signs of a natural love for tending the sick, and as she grew into her teens this tendency became still more marked. Her youthful sympathy, cheerful disposition, and easy ways made her presence welcome at all times in the cottages of the people, and especially so when she came on a little sick visit. She was wonderfully quick in anticipating any little service that might bring ease to a patient, while the brightness and tenderness of her manner had in themselves a real power of bracing. An amusing story, having also the merit of truth, is told of how on one occasion she offered a man sixpence if he would take a certain medicine which she was convinced would cure him of his ill. The man did not fancy the draught and declined the offer. He has recently expressed regret that he did not agree to do as asked.

At the age of seventeen she left Swardeston to go to school at Clevedon, and afterwards went to a school kept by a Mrs. Lavington, at Somerset.

The position she occupied there was a dual one, for she was partly teacher and partly pupil. On leaving Somerset, she continued her education at Peterborough and London by a similar arrangement. At this period of her career, she showed no small gifts at painting, both in water-colour and oils, a taste and accomplishment which were also found in one of her sisters. Between them they managed to raise no less a sum than £300 by the sale of their productions, and the money was devoted to helping to build a Sunday School at Swardeston. Ethel Cavell was the eldest of a family of three daughters and one son. One of her sisters is married to Dr. Wainwright, of Henley, and the other sister is at present engaged in nursing. The brother is connected with an important insurance business at Norwich. The father, on resigning the living at Swardeston, some six years ago, came to reside at Norwich. He died about three years ago.

In 1896 Miss Cavell entered that profession in which she was to spend the rest of her life and to adorn so nobly. Nature had more than liberally endowed her with the right qualities. Quickness of perception, steadiness of nerve, quick sympathy, and the gift of inspiring complete confidence, were united to an intense love for the work to which she was ready to devote all her energies. In September of that year she entered the London

Hospital as a probationer, and after completing her training went as night superintendent at St. Pancras (North Infirmary). Here she won many friends. The circle of those drawn to her by admiration for her abilities and love for her personal goodness was still further increased when she afterwards became assistant-matron at Shoreditch Infirmary. Memories of numerous quiet acts of charity cling fragrantly about her stay there. Notwithstanding her exacting and responsible duties she managed to follow up some of her cases after discharge, and was never tired of finding places in convalescent homes or arranging seaside holidays for small children. When the news and manner of her death reached the Infirmary, many humble callers were moved to tears as they remembered kindnesses she had done for them or their children. The helplessness of the poor at all times affected her; their sorry lot in days of sickness and suffering was irresistible. [Somewhat fragile though she was, no call of her profession ever daunted her any more than did the prospect of death at the hands of a merciless foe.]

CHAPTER II.

NURSING WORK IN BELGIUM.

IN 1907 she gave up her duties in England to undertake the control of what was practically a piece of pioneer work in Belgium. Up to that time there had not existed in that little country any training-ground for nurses answering to the big hospitals and infirmaries in England. Almost the only sick nurses which Belgium then possessed were nuns, who had had no regular training, though their aid and sympathy were invaluable. But scientific nursing as we know it in our own great healing institutions was not then sufficiently understood by the Belgian people to win for it their approval. In fact, at that time much public and private opposition was shown at any attempt to introduce new methods. Here was just the kind of opportunity for which Miss Cavell longed. She became matron of a school for nurses, newly opened by a well-known Belgian practitioner, Dr. Depage, in the Rue de la Culture, Brussels. } English nurses

were invited to apply for the position, and Miss Cavell was selected from a number of applicants. How wise was the choice became soon apparent. Her sweet, frank nature quickly gained her the warm regard of her Belgian pupils, and wherever prejudice against more scientific methods of nursing revealed itself, her appeal and proof quickly triumphed. Writing of the school in those early days, Miss Cavell said: "One of our first duties was to recruit the nurses. The old idea that it is a disgrace for women to work is still held in Belgium, and women of good birth and education still think they lose caste by earning their own living. [The contrast the probationers present to the nurses in their heavy stiff robes, and the lay nurses in their grimy apparel, is the contrast of the unhygienic past with the enlightened present.] These Belgian probationers have goodwill, courage, and perseverance, and in three years' time they will look back on the first days of trial with wonder. . . . The spread of light and knowledge is bound to follow in years to come. The nurses will not only teach, as none others have the opportunity of doing, the laws of health and the prevention and healing of disease, they will show their countrywomen that education and position do not constitute a bar to an independent life; they are rather a good and solid foundation on which to build a career which demands the best and highest qualities

that womanhood can offer." [In 1909 she came over to England as a fraternal delegate to the International Council of Nurses held in London. The description she there gave of the work she was attempting in Brussels made a deep impression.] △

Miss Cavell liked to spend her holidays in England, more especially in order that she might visit her aged mother at Norwich. For her own part, she greatly loved the sea-coast, especially that [delightful stretch between Cromer and Bacton.] Part of her holiday was generally enjoyed in that neighbourhood. The last time she returned to her homeland was shortly before the outbreak of war.

In the early days of the sweeping German advance in Belgium, Miss Cavell found herself confronted with an imperative choice. She could flee, as many other English women were doing, from the doomed little country, or she could elect to stay and face she knew not what. Her answer was decisive. She would remain. "At a time like this," she said, "I am more needed than ever." All around her were fast accumulating the awful evidences of Teuton barbarity. But they failed to break her spirit of devotion to her work and humanity. The hospitals of Brussels overflowed with the wounded of friends and foes alike. [In her service to the suffering she made no distinction.] The brutal Prussian, lying helplessly wounded, found her as

tender as a sister. The extent of her sympathy had in it something truly divine.

She, with a large number of English and Belgian nurses, was placed in charge of the Berkendael Medical Institute ; some of her staff, school nurses, took charge of a board school converted into a hospital, and the nurses of German nationality were "invited" to leave the country. Miss Cavell wrote thus of the women whose fellow-countrymen were one day to bring her to execution: "We were sorry to send them away, but the 'invitation' might not be refused. They spent the night at the Cirque Royale with many other fugitives, sleeping how they could, [and left Brussels very early in the morning by a special train (the last) for the Dutch frontier.] We saw them off with their hand luggage—all they were allowed to take—and we are still anxiously waiting for news of their safe arrival."

Miss Cavell was an occasional contributor to *The Nursing Mirror and Midwives' Journal*, and in the issue of that journal for April 24th, 1915, appeared an article in which she described those sad days when the fate of Belgium hung in the balance. She wrote: "From the day of the occupation till now we have been cut off from the world outside. Newspapers were first censored, then suppressed, and are now printed under German auspices ; all coming from abroad were for a time forbidden, and now none are allowed from England. The tele-

phone service was taken over by the enemy, and we were shortly deprived of its use. The post, too, was stopped, and, though now resumed to certain towns and countries, all letters must be left open and contain no news of the war or of anything of importance. The few trains that run for passengers are in German hands, and wherever you go you must have, and pay for, a passport. No bicycles are allowed, and practically no motors, [so the once busy and bustling streets are very quiet and silent.] So are the people, who were so gay and communicative in the summer. No one speaks to his neighbour in the tram, for he may be a spy. Besides, what news is there to tell, and who has the heart to gossip, and what fashions are there to speak of, and who ever goes to a concert or a theatre nowadays, and who would care to tell of their all-absorbing anxiety as to how to make both ends meet and spin out the last of the savings or to keep the little mouths at home filled, with the stranger close by? I am but a looker-on after all, for it is not my country whose soil is desecrated and whose sacred places are laid waste. I can only feel the deep and tender pity of the friend within the gates, and observe with sympathy and admiration the high courage and self-control of a people enduring a long and terrible agony. They have grown thin and silent with the fearful strain. They walk about the city shoulder to shoulder with the foe, and never

see them or make a sign ; only they leave the cafés which they frequent and turn their backs to them, and live a long way off and apart. A German officer on a tram politely asked a gentleman for a light ; he handed him his cigar without a word, and, receiving it back, threw it in the gutter. Such incidents happen often, and are typical of the conduct of this much-tried nation."

The occupation of Brussels by the Germans saw the beginning of a reign of terror, of which her death marked the meanest and most fiendish point hitherto reached. In this tragedy, that has moved the whole civilised world, the crime of it is only made to appear the more revolting by the sublime courage and nobility of the victim and the unforgettable chivalry of those who so earnestly pleaded, though in vain, for some show of clemency.

It will be helpful to recall at this stage the leading figures in this terrible drama. Towards the end of 1914 there was appointed, as German Governor of the occupied portion of Belgium, General Baron von Bissing, who had, as the head of his political department, Baron von der Lancken. The American Minister to Belgium was Mr. Brand Whitlock, well-known in America as an author and a reformer. In one of his best-known books—"The Turn of the Balance"—he criticises the law as administered in the United States, and pleads for human justice and sympathy. With him, as

Secretary of the American Legation in Brussels, was Mr. Hugh Simons Gibson and M. de Leval, Legal Counsellor to the Legation. Mr. Gibson is a native of Los Angeles, California, and is only thirty-three. At the early age of twenty-six he was appointed Second Secretary to the American Embassy in London. The British chaplain, the Rev. H. S. T. Gahan, was appointed by the Colonial and Continental Church Society to Christ Church, Brussels, in the spring of 1914. He was the only British clergyman in Brussels when the war broke out. In November he was arrested, at the time when all the British men were deported, but after five days' imprisonment he was released at the instance of the American Legation.

CHAPTER III.

ARREST AND TRIAL.

THE reign of terror, begun with the first entry of the Germans into Brussels, appears to have increased considerably in later months. More and more repressive measures came to be put in force at the instigation of General von Bissing. Miss Cavell was one of several persons to fall under suspicion of hiding British and French soldiers at her house, and of helping them and young Belgians of military age to cross the frontier. On August 5th she was arrested, but the American Legation in Brussels did not come to hear of it until August 31st. The American Minister, Mr. Brand Whitlock, wrote at once to Baron von der Lancken, requesting particulars and permission to see Miss Cavell in order to arrange for her defence. No reply was received, and a second application was made on September 10th, to which Baron von der Lancken replied on September 12th, stating that Miss Cavell had admitted the charge and that her defence was in the hands

of a Mr. Braun. Mr. Whitlock had asked permission for M. de Leval, the Legal Counsellor to the American Legation, to confer with Miss Cavell respecting her defence, but this was refused.

It is clear from a letter sent by Mr. Brand Whitlock to the American Ambassador in London that even at this stage Miss Cavell had admitted having hidden in her house English and French soldiers, and had facilitated the departure of Belgian soldiers for the front, furnishing them with money and guides to pass the frontier. She never appears to have sought to evade the allegation of her accusers. She probably knew as well as anyone that her action was against the German military law. She may also be allowed to have shrewdly guessed what the penalty would be were she once arrested. Respect for womanhood had long since been shown to form no part of the religion of valour preached by Bernhardt and completely embodied in German military ethics. It is to do less than justice to her patriotism, intelligence, and noble courage to suppose that she did not take into account all the terrible possibilities that hung on her endeavour to protect and help anyone belonging to our Allied forces. Saving the lives of others had been the purpose to which she had dedicated her life, and the concealing and smuggling away of hunted soldiers who stood in jeopardy was probably in her view as humanitarian an action as tending

the wounded. And to do this she was prepared to calmly face the worst consequences, as her last hours prove.

Refusal having been made to the application for permission for Mr. de Leval to confer with Miss Cavell as to her defence, Mr. de Leval had an interview with Mr. Braun, who stated that as unforeseen circumstances prevented his taking up the case he had asked Mr. Kirschen, a member of the Brussels Bar, to plead for Miss Cavell. Asked whether he had seen Miss Cavell and whether she had made any statement to him, Mr. Kirschen said that lawyers defending prisoners before the German Military Court were not allowed to see their clients before the trial, and were not shown any document of the prosecution. He added that the hearing of the trial of such cases was carried out very carefully, and that, in his opinion, although it was not possible to see the client before the trial, in fact the trial itself developed so carefully and so slowly that it was generally possible to have a fair knowledge of all the facts and to present a good defence for the prisoner. This, he went on to say, would specially be the case for Miss Cavell, because the trial would be rather long, as she was prosecuted with thirty-four other prisoners. Informed that Mr. de Leval intended to watch the case, he dissuaded him on the ground that such an attitude would cause a great prejudice to the prisoner, as the German

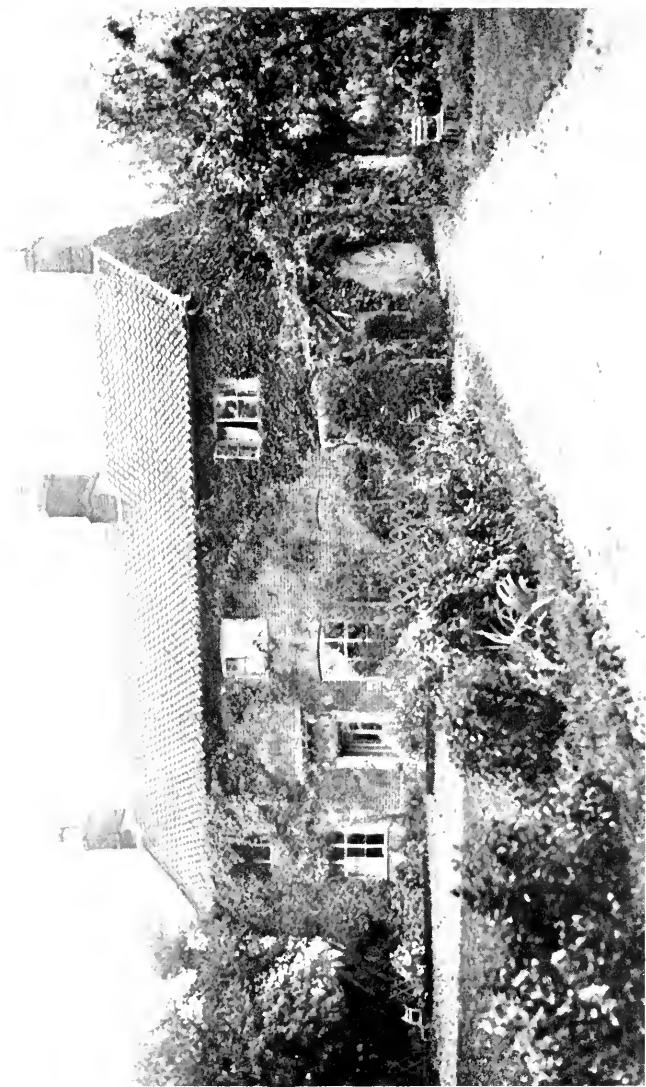


Photo. by Svein Norvich

NURSE CAVELL'S BIRTHPLACE AT SWARDESION

[Copyright Jarrolds.]

judges would resent it, and feel it almost as an affront. Mr. Kirschen, who, though a naturalised Belgian subject, is said to be of Austrian origin, was at great pains to assure that the Brussels Military Court was always perfectly fair, and that there was not the slightest danger of any miscarriage of justice. He promised to keep the American Legation posted as to all developments the case might take, and to state the result of the trial. He further declared that he would do all that was humanly possible to defend Miss Cavell.

From this point events became veiled with a strange secrecy. It is true that three days before the date fixed for the trial, Thursday, October 7th, Mr. Kirschen wrote briefly informing the American Legation of this fact. The trial began on the date stated, and lasted for two days. But no information concerning it reached the American Legation from Mr. Kirschen. All the Legation came to hear of the case was conveyed by an outsider on the Saturday. The Legation was given to understand that though the trial was completed, judgment would not be given till a few days later. Efforts were made by the Legation staff to find Mr. Kirschen, but without success. The Legation was left to shift for itself in gleaning any information respecting the course of the trial. On Saturday, October 10th, Mr. de Leval learned from a person present at the proceedings that Miss Cavell, in her

statement, provided almost all the facts of the prosecution. This informant stated :—

“ Miss Cavell was prosecuted for having helped English and French soldiers, as well as Belgian young men, to cross the frontier and to go over to England. She had admitted by signing a statement before the day of the trial, and by public acknowledgment in court, in the presence of all the other prisoners and the lawyers, that she was guilty of the charges brought against her, and she had acknowledged not only that she had helped these soldiers to cross the frontier, but also that some of them had thanked her in writing when arriving in England. This last admission made her case so much the more serious, because if it only had been proved against her that she had helped the soldiers to traverse the Dutch frontier, and no proof was produced that those soldiers had reached a country at war with Germany, she could only have been sentenced for an attempt to commit the ‘ crime ’ and not for the ‘ crime ’ being duly accomplished. As the case stood, the sentence fixed by the German military law was a sentence of death. In her oral statement before the Court, Miss Cavell disclosed almost all the facts of the whole prosecution. She was questioned in German, an interpreter translating all the questions in French, with which language Miss Cavell was well acquainted. She spoke without trembling, and showed a clear mind.

Often she added some greater precision to her previous depositions.

“When she was asked why she helped these soldiers to go to England, she replied that she thought that, if she had not done so, they would have been shot by the Germans, and that, therefore, she thought she only did her duty to her country in saving their lives.”

CHAPTER IV.

FIGHT FOR A WOMAN'S LIFE.

ON the same Sunday evening, and on Monday, Mr. de Leval made repeated endeavours to get permission to see Miss Cavell, but without avail. Assurances were, however, given by Mr. Conrad, of the Political Division of the German Government in Belgium, that he would not fail to inform the American Legation as soon as there was any news. The atmosphere of mystery began to thicken rapidly. At 8.30 on that Monday evening the Legation suddenly learned that sentence had been passed on Miss Cavell in the course of the afternoon, and that her execution would take place at two o'clock next morning. Even this announcement, like the account of the trial, came to them from an outside source. The American Minister being at the time ill in bed, Mr. Hugh Gibson, the Secretary to the American Legation, proceeded, in accordance with the Minister's instructions, to look for the Spanish Minister. Mr. Gibson was accompanied by M.

de Leval, and after finding the Spanish Minister all three called on Baron von der Lancken to plead in the name of the Legation that execution of the death penalty should be deferred until the Governor could consider the appeal for clemency.

The simple story of that momentous interview, as told by Mr. Gibson in the report to his sick chief, takes a place side by side with the supremely touching record furnished by the English chaplain of his final conversation with Miss Cavell. "So far as I am able to judge," wrote Mr. Gibson, "we neglected to present no phase of the matter which might have had any effect, emphasising the horror of executing a woman, no matter what her offence, pointing out that the death sentence had heretofore been imposed only for actual cases of espionage and that Miss Cavell was not even accused by the German authorities of anything so serious. I further called attention to the failure to comply with Mr. Conrad's promise to inform the Legation of the sentence. I urged that, inasmuch as the offences charged against Miss Cavell were long since accomplished, and that as she had been for some weeks in prison, a delay in carrying out the sentence could entail no danger to the German cause. I even went so far as to point out the fearful effect of a summary execution of this sort upon public opinion both here and abroad, and, although I had no authority for doing so, called attention to the

possibility that it might bring about reprisals. The Spanish Minister forcibly supported all our representations and made an earnest plea for clemency. Baron von der Lancken stated that the Military Governor was the supreme authority (*Gerichtsherr*) in matters of this sort; that appeal from his decision could be carried only to the Emperor, the Governor-General having no authority to intervene in such cases. He added that under the provisions of German martial law the Military Governor had discretionary powers to accept or to refuse acceptance of an appeal for clemency. After some discussion he agreed to call the Military Governor on the telephone. He returned in about half an hour, and stated that he had been to confer personally with the Military Governor, who said that he had acted in the case of Miss Cavell only after mature deliberation; that the circumstances in her case were of such a character that he considered the infliction of the death penalty imperative, and that in view of the circumstances of this case he must decline to accept your plea for clemency or any representation in regard to the matter. Baron von der Lancken then asked me to take back the note which I had presented to him. To this I demurred, pointing out that it was not a '*requête en grâce*,' but merely a note to him transmitting a communication to the Governor, which was itself to be considered as the '*requête en grâce*.' I pointed out

that this was expressly stated in your note to him, and tried to prevail upon him to keep it ; he was very insistent, however, and I finally reached the conclusion that inasmuch as he had read it aloud to us, and we knew that he was aware of its contents, there was nothing to be gained by refusing to accept the note, and accordingly took it back. Even after Baron von der Lancken's very positive and definite statement that there was no hope, and that under the circumstances 'even the Emperor himself could not intervene,' we continued to appeal to every sentiment to secure delay, and the Spanish Minister even led Baron von der Lancken aside in order to say very forcibly a number of things which he would have felt hesitancy in saying in the presence of the younger officers and of Mr. de Leval, a Belgian subject. His Excellency talked very earnestly with Baron von der Lancken for about a quarter of an hour. During this time Mr. de Leval and I presented to the younger officers every argument we could think of. I reminded them of our untiring efforts on behalf of German subjects at the outbreak of the war and during the siege of Antwerp. I pointed out that while our services had been rendered gladly and without any thought of future favours, they should certainly entitle you to some consideration for the only request of this sort you had made since the beginning of the war. Unfortunately our efforts were unavailing. We

persevered until it was only too clear that there was no hope of securing any consideration for the case. We left the Politische Abteilung shortly after midnight."

CHAPTER V.

“ SHE DIED LIKE A HEROINE.”

WHILE this chivalrous fight of diplomacy was being put forth on Miss Cavell's behalf, Mr. Gahan, the British Chaplain, was saying his last “good-bye” to this noble woman in the condemned cell.

“On Monday evening, Oct. 11th, I was admitted,” wrote Mr. Gahan, “by special passport from the German authorities, to the prison of St. Gilles, where Miss Edith Cavell had been confined for ten weeks. The final sentence had been given early that afternoon.

“To my astonishment and relief I found my friend perfectly calm and resigned. But this could not lessen the tenderness and intensity of feeling on either part during that last interview of almost an hour.

“Her first words to me were upon a matter concerning herself personally, but the solemn asseveration which accompanied them was made expressly in the light of God and eternity. She then added

that she wished all her friends to know that she willingly gave her life for her country, and said, 'I have no fear nor shrinking; I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me.'

"She further said: 'I thank God for this ten weeks' quiet before the end. Life has always been hurried and full of difficulty. This time of rest has been a great mercy. They have all been very kind to me here. But this I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.'

"We partook of the Holy Communion together, and she received the Gospel message of consolation with all her heart. At the close of the little service I began to repeat the words, 'Abide with me,' and she joined softly in the end.

"We sat quietly talking until it was time for me to go. She gave me parting messages for relations and friends. She spoke of her soul's needs at the moment, and she received the assurance of God's Word as only the Christian can do.

"Then I said 'Good-bye,' and she smiled and said, 'We shall meet again.' "

A little later Edith Cavell, Christian and heroine, lay dead in the cold courtyard of the prison of St. Gilles. Three accounts have been given of the actual death-scene. According to the German chaplain, the execution was carried out

under circumstances of no more than the inevitable horror and pain. The version given by the *Telegraf*, of Amsterdam, was that the soldiers composing the firing party were so affected by the gallant bearing of Miss Cavell that they deliberately aimed wide so that she was hit by only one stray bullet, whereupon the officer in charge shot her dead with his own revolver. Another story relates that as she was led to the prison road the much-tried body overcame the courageous spirit and she fainted. But though we know not the precise details of her death, we have it on even the word of the German military chaplain, who was with her at the end, that “ she was brave and bright to the last. She professed her Christian faith, and that she was glad to die for her country. She died like a heroine.”

On October 12th Mr. Whitlock wrote to Baron von der Lancken the following letter : “ Monsieur Faider, as President of the Court of Appeal of Brussels and President of the Belgian School of Certified Nurses, requests me to ask on behalf of this institution, of which she was directress, for the body of Miss Cavell, who was executed this morning. The committee undertakes to conform to all measures that the German military administration may judge necessary in regard to the removal of the body, and its being kept in a cemetery in the town of Brussels. I am persuaded that

there can be no objection to this request, and that the institution to which Miss Cavell consecrated so charitably a portion of her life will not be refused the fulfilment of this pious duty. I therefore beg to support the request of this Belgian School of Certificated Nurses." Two days after, Mr. Whitlock wrote to the American Ambassador in London, stating: "I have not received a written reply to my note to Baron von der Lancken on the subject, but he came to see me yesterday afternoon and stated that the body had been interred near the prison of St. Gilles, where the execution took place; and that under the regulations governing such cases it was impossible to exhume the body without written permission from the Minister of War in Berlin. He added that he had no authority to ask permission to exhume the body, but that immediately upon the return of the Governor-General he would request him to take the matter up. I shall hope to be able to tell you that we have at least been able to accomplish this small service." The whole conduct of Mr. Whitlock throughout this terrible affair presents one of the most chivalrous chapters in the history of diplomacy.

Not since the sinking of the "Lusitania" did the news of any incident connected with the war create such a feeling of resentment against the German ruling caste as the story of Miss Cavell's end. All the secrecy and subterfuge adopted by

those responsible for her execution to hide the real facts when diplomacy was making desperate efforts to stay their hand, were revealed to a shocked civilisation in the now famous diplomatic correspondence published to the world only a few days after the tragedy. The Press of America, while mindful that in the heat of combat many atrocities can be committed, refused to believe that any country, except Germany, boasting civilisation and culture, would have committed, officially, so monstrous a crime against civilisation and humanity. In England, as elsewhere, it was recognised that what Miss Cavell did was in contravention of the regulations issued by the German authorities. If she had been punished according to the measure of her fault, nothing would probably have been heard of her case. But her punishment was out of all proportion to her offence. It was this, coupled with an obvious attempt by the German authorities to hasten the last act of their vengeance lest something should intervene to defeat their purpose, that caused civilised opinion to revolt.

CHAPTER VI.

WORLD-WIDE INDIGNATION.

THE name of Edith Cavell, hitherto known to a comparatively small circle of people, became in the course of a few hours a household one not only in this country but throughout our Empire and neutral countries. It soon leaked out that she had an aged widow mother living in Norwich. Messages of touching sympathy began to pour in upon her. Mrs. Cavell was living alone with her maid at College Road, a pleasant suburban thoroughfare. She had already passed her eightieth year. In this moment of overwhelming bereavement and sudden world-wide recognition, she found her main human support and comfort in the frequent visits of the rector of South Heigham, the Rev. G. M. Davies, as her daughter had gained strength and consolation from the interview with the English chaplain in Brussels. Except when Mr. Davies visited her, Mrs. Cavell remained alone. Most of her time she devoted to acknowledging messages of sympathy in

her own handwriting, for, despite her years, she can still write a clear and steady hand. The gracious letters she received from the King and Queen, and Queen Alexandra, touched her greatly. One communication, sent to Mr. Davies from a distant address, ran: "I don't want to intrude on Mrs. Cavell in her great sorrow, but perhaps at a fitting moment you will tell her that one father, with all his sons (three) at the front, has been so much moved by the bravery of this noble woman, Nurse Cavell, that he has written to his boys pointing out how little death really means to the one that is prepared to meet it, and telling them, if they love their mother and sister, never to forget Nurse Cavell." The following very beautiful tribute was sent to England by some French ladies, including Madame Adam, Madame A. Daudet, Mlle. Deroulede, the Marquise de Ganay, the Duchess d'Uzes, Madame Viviani, Madame Emile Zola, Comtesse Greffulhe, and Madame Poincaré: "Sisters of England,—The women of France unite with you in an expression of horror, admiration, and indignation in the presence of the martyrdom of Edith Cavell. We want you to know that our soldiers are as resolute as your noble volunteers to avenge an innocent victim and pattern of patriotism. Edith Cavell united in herself the highest of those qualities which we admire in you all. She went to her doom like a true Englishwoman, quietly,

piously, proudly. She is our sister also, and we shall love you, Sisters of England, better through her, and praise England, which brings forth such daughters. Her memory will give us women of England and women of France energy to endure to the end the heaviest burthens of a war which will free the world and bring to justice a people of torturers."

A desire to perpetuate in some tangible form the memory of Miss Cavell at once manifested itself. Sir George Frampton, R.A., one of our greatest sculptors, on having the idea of a statue mentioned to him, replied: "I will model a statue to the memory of this English heroine, and it shall be for me a labour of love." When asked what it would cost, he answered: "It will cost what the bronze and stone will cost. I would not accept a penny for my work." Several funds were opened in London and different parts of the country, and Mrs. Cavell received many inquiries as to the form of memorial she thought would be most in harmony with her daughter's own feelings. "Something really useful," was her invariable reply. In Norfolk a memorial fund was early opened by the Lord Mayor (Dr. J. G. Gordon-Munn), and subscriptions quickly began to flow in.

On October 28th, a memorial service was held in Norwich Cathedral. The Corporation attended in state, under the headship of the Lord Mayor



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EDITH CAVELL IN HER GARDEN

(Dr. Gordon-Munn). The High Sheriff of the county was present, in company with his chaplain and his Under-Sheriff, and the presbytery was almost exclusively occupied with a party of nearly fifty sisters and nurses from the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital under the headship of the lady superintendent. The Military Hospital at Lakenham was represented by the matron, with one of her nursing staff. The Norfolk War Hospital, which, having on the previous evening received a large convoy of wounded, was unable to release any of the nurses, was represented by its chaplain. The national memorial service took place on the following day in St. Paul's Cathedral. The King and Queen were represented, and there was a great gathering of notable people. The most impressive sight in the congregation was the numerous assembly of matrons, sisters, and nurses in uniform from the various London hospitals.

As this little work goes to press, public authorities all over the country are considering what form their own memorial to this noble woman shall take. One thing is certain, the name of Edith Cavell can never be forgotten while there is any chivalry left in man, and any tenderness in woman.

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE.

THE following letters were issued by the Foreign Office on October 22, 1915:—

LONDON,

Oct. 18, 1915.

Immediate.

The American Ambassador presents compliments to his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, with reference to his note of the 13th inst., has the honour to enclose herewith a copy of a letter, dated October 13, just received from the Legation at Brussels, together with a report upon the case of Miss Edith Cavell, a British subject, who was recently executed at that capital.

MR. WHITLOCK TO BARON VON DER
LANCKEN.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
BRUSSELS,

Aug. 31, 1915.

EXCELLENCY,

My Legation has just been informed that Miss Edith Cavell, a British subject residing in the Rue de la Culture, Brussels, has been arrested.

I should be greatly obliged to your Excellency if you would be kind enough to inform me if this information is correct, and, if so, what are the reasons for this arrest. I should also be grateful, in this event, if you would be kind enough to send to the Legation the necessary authorisation from the German judicial authorities to enable M. de Leval to confer with Miss Cavell and, if need be, entrust some one with her defence.

I take this opportunity of renewing to your Excellency the assurance of my high consideration.

BRAND WHITLOCK.

To his Excellency Baron von der Lancken,
Brussels.

As there was no reply to this letter the American Minister again pressed for information on September 10 in the following letter :—

BRUSSELS,

Sept. 10, 1915.

The Minister of the United States presents his compliments to his Excellency Baron von der Lancken and has the honour to remind him of his letter of August 31 concerning the arrest of Miss Cavell, to which he has not yet received any reply.

As the Minister has been requested by telegram to attend forthwith to the defence of Miss Cavell,

he would be greatly obliged to his Excellency Baron von der Lancken if he would be kind enough to enable him to take immediately the steps which may prove necessary for this defence and to reply by telegram to the instructions which he has received.

To his Excellency Baron von der Lancken,
Brussels.

BARON VON DER LANCKEN'S REPLY.

BRUSSELS,

Sept. 12, 1915.

Political Department of the Governor-General in
Belgium.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

In reply to the note which your Excellency has been good enough to address me under date of the 31st ult., I have the honour to inform you that Miss Edith Cavell was arrested on August 5, and is at present in the military prison of St. Gilles.

She has herself confessed to having concealed in her residence English and French soldiers, as also Belgians of military age, all desirous of proceeding to the front. She has also confessed to having provided these soldiers with the money necessary for travelling to France, and to having facilitated their

escape from Belgium by procuring them guides who enabled them to cross secretly the Dutch frontier.

Miss Cavell's defence is in the hands of a barrister, M. Braun, who has indeed already placed himself in communication with the competent German authorities.

In view of the fact that the Government-General, as a matter of principle, does not allow accused persons to have any interviews whatever, I infinitely regret that I cannot procure for M. de Leval permission to visit Miss Cavell so long as she is in custody.

I take this opportunity, etc., etc.

LANCKEN.

BRUSSELS,

Sept. 21, 1915.

His Excellency the Honourable Walter Hines Page,
American Ambassador, London.

SIR,

Referring to your telegram of August 27, in regard to the case of Miss Edith Cavell, who was arrested on August 5, and is now in the military prison at St. Gilles, I beg to enclose herewith for your information copy of a communication which I have just received from Baron von der Lancken in regard to the matter.

The legal adviser appointed to defend Miss Cavell has informed the Legation that she has indeed admitted having hidden in her house English and French soldiers and has facilitated the departure of Belgian subjects for the front, furnishing them with money and guides to enable them to cross the frontier.

The Legation will, of course, keep this case in view and endeavour to see that a fair trial is given Miss Cavell, and will not fail to let you know of any developments.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

BRAND WHITLOCK.

AMERICAN LEGATION, BRUSSELS,

Oct. 5, 1915.

M. Sadi Kirschen, Barrister at the Court of Appeal,
32, Rue aux Laines, Brussels.

MONSIEUR L'AVOCAT,

Thank you for the letter which you kindly addressed to M. de Leval, informing him that Miss Cavell's case would come before the Court-martial on Thursday next, at 8 a.m. As agreed, I should be greatly obliged if, after the hearing, you would kindly send me a memorandum setting forth the

acts for which Miss Cavell is prosecuted and indicating the charges made against her at the hearing, as also the sentence pronounced.

Accept, Monsieur l'Avocat, the assurance of my distinguished sentiments.

For the Minister,

G. DE LEVAL,
Legal Advisor to the Legation.

BRUSSELS,
Oct. 9, 1915.

His Excellency the Honourable Walter Hines Page,
American Ambassador, London.

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of September 23, in regard to the arrest by the German military authorities of Miss Edith Cavell, head of a training school for nurses.

Upon receipt of your telegram 448, August 27, I took the matter up with the German authorities, and learned that Miss Cavell had indeed been arrested upon a "charge of espionage." The Belgian attorney appointed to defend her before the Court-martial called several times at the Legation, and will continue to keep me well posted in regard to the case. It seems that Miss Cavell has made

several very damaging admissions, and there appeared to be no ground upon which I could ask for her release before the trial.

The case will come up for trial next week, and I will write you as soon as there is any further development.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

BRAND WHITLOCK.

BRUSSELS,

Oct. 11, 1915.

His Excellency the Honourable Walter Hines Page,
American Ambassador, London.

SIR,

Referring to my letter of October 9 in regard to the case of Miss Edith Cavell, I hasten to send you word that her trial has been completed and that the German prosecutor has asked for sentence of death against her and eight other persons implicated by her testimony. Sentence has not as yet been pronounced, and I have some hope that the Court-martial may decline to pass the rigorous sentence proposed.

I have thus far done everything that has been possible to secure a fair trial for Miss Cavell, and

am assured by her attorney that no complaint can be made on that score.

I feel that it would be useless to take any action until sentence is pronounced. I shall then, of course, neglect no effort to prevent an unduly severe penalty being inflicted upon her. I shall immediately telegraph you upon the pronouncement of sentence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

BRAND WHITLOCK.

Oct. 11, 1915.

EXCELLENCY,

I have just learned that Miss Cavell, a British subject, and consequently under the protection of my Legation, was sentenced to death this morning by Court-martial.

Without going into the reasons, which have led to so severe a sentence—a sentence which, if I am correctly informed, is more severe in this case than in all other cases of the same kind which have been tried by the same tribunal—I trust I can appeal to the feelings of humanity and generosity of his Excellency the Governor-General on behalf of Miss Cavell, in order that the death penalty pronounced

against her may be commuted, and that this unhappy woman may not be executed.

Miss Cavell is a nurse, the head of the Surgical Institute of Brussels. She has spent her life in alleviating the sufferings of others, and at her school numerous nurses have been trained who, throughout the world, in Germany as in Belgium, have watched at the bedside of the sick. At the beginning of the war Miss Cavell gave her services as much to German soldiers as to others. If for no other reason, her career of humanity is of a kind to inspire the utmost pity and to procure for her the utmost mercy. If I am correctly informed, Miss Cavell, far from concealing anything, admitted, with laudable frankness, all the facts laid to her charge, and it was, indeed, information which was given by herself alone, and which she alone was in a position to give, which increased the severity of the sentence passed upon her.

It is therefore with confidence and in the hope of its being favourably received that I beg your Excellency to present to the Governor-General my petition for clemency (*requête en grâce*) on behalf of Miss Cavell.

I take this opportunity of renewing to your Excellency the assurance of my high consideration.

BRAND WHITLOCK.

To his Excellency Baron von der Lancken,
Brussels.

A postscript in the Minister's own handwriting follows :—

MY DEAR BARON,

I am too ill to present you my petition in person, but I appeal to your generosity of heart to support it and save this unhappy woman from death. Have pity on her !

Yours very sincerely,

BRAND WHITLOCK.

An identical letter, except for the postscript, was simultaneously sent by the Minister to Baron von Bissing, Governor-General in Belgium.

TELEGRAM TO MR. PAGE.

BRUSSELS,

Oct. 12, 1915.

American Ambassador, London.

Your letter September 23 and my replies October 9 and 11. Miss Cavell sentenced yesterday and executed at 2 o'clock this morning, despite our best

efforts, continued until the last moment. Full report follows by mail.

WHITLOCK,
American Minister.

On October 13, Mr. Whitlock sent a full report on the case to the American Ambassador in London, embodying reports by Mr. Gibson, Secretary of the American Legation in Brussels, and M. de Leval, Legal Counsellor to the Legation. Mr. Whitlock's letter follows :—

AMERICAN LEGATION, BRUSSELS,
Oct. 13, 1915.

His Excellency the Honourable Walter Hines Page,
American Ambassador, London.

SIR,

Referring to previous correspondence in regard to the case of Miss Edith Cavell, I regret to be obliged to inform you in confirmation of my telegram of yesterday morning that the death sentence recommended by the Prosecuting Attorney was imposed by the Court-martial, and that Miss Cavell was executed early yesterday morning.

I enclose herewith for your information copies

of all the correspondence which I have had with the German authorities in regard to this case, together with copies of previous letters addressed to you on the subject.

I know that you will understand without my telling you that we exhausted every possible effort to prevent the infliction of the death penalty, and that our failure has been felt by us as a very severe blow. I am convinced, however, that no step was neglected which could have had any effect. From the date we first learned of Miss Cavell's imprisonment, we made frequent inquiries of the German authorities and reminded them of their promise that we should be fully informed as to developments.

They were under no misapprehension as to our interest in the matter. Although the German authorities did not inform me when the sentence had actually been passed, I learned through an unofficial source that judgment had been delivered and that Miss Cavell was to be executed during the night. I immediately sent Mr. Gibson, the Secretary of Legation, to present to Baron von der Lancken my appeal that execution of the sentence should be deferred until the Governor could consider my plea for clemency. Mr. Gibson was accompanied by Maître de Leval, Legal Counsellor of the Legation, who had worked from the beginning upon the legal aspect of the case. Mr. Gibson was fortunate enough

to find the Spanish Minister, and got him to accompany him on his visit to Baron von der Lancken. The details of the visit you will find in Mr. Gibson's report to me. The other papers which are attached speak for themselves and require no further comment from me.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

BRAND WHITLOCK.

BARON VON DER LANCKEN INTERVIEWED.

REPORT OF MR. GIBSON.

BRUSSELS,

Oct. 12, 1915.

SIR,

Upon learning early yesterday morning through unofficial sources that the trial of Miss Edith Cavell had been finished on Saturday afternoon and that the prosecuting Attorney (*Kriegsgerichtsrat*) had asked for a sentence of death against her, telephonic inquiry was immediately made at the Politische Abteilung as to the facts.

It was stated that no sentence had as yet been pronounced, and that there would probably be delay of a day or two before a decision was reached. Mr. Conrad gave positive assurances that the Legation would be fully informed as to developments in this case. Despite these assurances, we made repeated inquiries in the course of the day, the last one being at 6.20 p.m. Belgian time. Mr. Conrad then stated that sentence had not yet been pronounced, and specifically renewed his previous assurances that he would not fail to inform us as soon as there was any news.

At 8.30 it was learned from an outside source that sentence had been passed in the course of the afternoon (before the last conversation with Mr. Conrad), and that the execution would take place during the night. In conformity with your instructions I went (accompanied by Mr. de Leval) to look for the Spanish Minister, and found him dining at the home of Baron Lambert. I explained the circumstances to his Excellency, and asked that (as you were ill and unable to go yourself) he go with us to see Baron von der Lancken and support as strongly as possible the plea which I was to make in your name that execution of the death penalty should be deferred until the Governor could consider your appeal for clemency.

We took with us a note addressed to Baron von der Lancken and a plea for clemency (*requête en*



Photo. by Seain, Norwich

SWARDESTON RECTORY, BUILT BY MISS CAVELL'S FATHER.

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grâce) addressed to the Governor-General (enclosure 1 and 2 attached to this report). The Spanish Minister willingly agreed to accompany us, and we went together to the Politische Abteilung.

Baron von der Lancken and all the members of his staff were absent for the evening. We sent a messenger to ask that he return at once to see us in regard to a matter of utmost urgency. A little after 10 o'clock he arrived, followed shortly after by Count Harrach and Herr von Falkenhausen, members of his staff. The circumstances of the case were explained to him and your note presented, and he read it aloud in our presence. He expressed disbelief in the report that sentence had actually been passed, and manifested some surprise that we should give credence to any report not emanating from official sources. He was quite insistent on knowing the exact source of our information, but this I did not feel at liberty to communicate to him.

Baron von der Lancken stated that it was quite improbable that sentence had been pronounced, that, even if so, it would not be executed within so short a time, and that in any event it would be quite impossible to take any action before morning. It was, of course, pointed out to him that if the facts were as we believed them to be, action would be useless unless taken at once.

We urged him to ascertain the facts immediately, and this, after some hesitancy, he agreed to do.

He telephoned to the presiding Judge of the Court-martial, and returned in a short time to say that the facts were as we had represented them, and that it was intended to carry out the sentence before morning. We then presented as earnestly as possible your plea for delay. So far as I am able to judge we neglected to present no phase of the matter which might have had any effect, emphasising the horror of executing a woman, no matter what her offence, pointing out that the death sentence had heretofore been imposed only for actual cases of espionage, and that Miss Cavell was not even accused by the German authorities of anything so serious. I further called attention to the failure to comply with Mr. Conrad's promise to inform the Legation of the sentence.

I urged that inasmuch as the offences charged against Miss Cavell were long since accomplished, and that as she had been for some weeks in prison a delay in carrying out the sentence could entail no danger to the German cause. I even went so far as to point out the fearful effect of a summary execution of this sort upon public opinion, both here and abroad, and, although I had no authority for doing so, called attention to the possibility that it might bring about reprisals. The Spanish Minister forcibly supported all our representations and made an earnest plea for clemency.

Baron von der Lancken stated that the Military

Governor was the supreme authority (*Gerichtsherr*) in matters of this sort; that appeal from his decision could be carried only to the Emperor, the Governor-General having no authority to intervene in such cases. He added that under the provisions of German Martial Law the Military Governor had discretionary powers to accept, or to refuse acceptance of, an appeal for clemency.

After some discussion he agreed to call the Military Governor on the telephone and learn whether he had already ratified the sentence and whether there was any chance for clemency. He returned in about half an hour and stated that he had been to confer personally with the Military Governor, who said that he had acted in the case of Miss Cavell only after mature deliberation; that the circumstances in her case were of such a character that he considered the infliction of the death penalty imperative, and that in view of the circumstances of this case he must decline to accept your plea for clemency or any representation in regard to the matter.

Baron von der Lancken then asked me to take back the note which I had presented to him. To this I demurred, pointing out that it was not a *requête en grâce*, but merely a note to him transmitting a communication to the Governor, which was itself to be considered as the *requête en grâce*. I pointed out that this was expressly stated in your

note to him, and tried to prevail upon him to keep it; he was very insistent, however, and I finally reached the conclusion that inasmuch as he had read it aloud to us and we knew that he was aware of its contents, there was nothing to be gained by refusing to accept the note, and accordingly took it back.

Even after Baron von der Lancken's very positive and definite statement that there was no hope, and that under the circumstances "even the Emperor himself could not intervene," we continued to appeal to every sentiment to secure delay, and the Spanish Minister even led Baron von der Lancken aside in order to say very forcibly a number of things which he would have felt hesitancy in saying in the presence of the younger officers and of Mr. de Leval, a Belgian subject.

His Excellency talked very earnestly with Baron von der Lancken for about a quarter of an hour. During this time Mr. de Leval and I presented to the younger officers every argument we could think of. I reminded them of our untiring efforts on behalf of German subjects at the outbreak of the war and during the siege of Antwerp. I pointed out that while our services had been rendered gladly and without any thought of future favours, they should certainly entitle you to some consideration for the only request of this sort you had made since the beginning of the war. Unfortunately our efforts were unavailing. We persevered until

it was only too clear that there was no hope of securing any consideration for the case.

We left the Politische Abteilung shortly after midnight, and I immediately returned to the Legation to report to you.

HUGH GIBSON.

REPORT OF M. DE LEVAL.

Oct. 12, 1915.

SIR,

As soon as the Legation received an intimation that Miss Cavell was arrested, your letter of August 31, of which a copy is herewith annexed, numbered 1, was sent to Baron von der Lancken. The German authorities were by that letter requested, *inter alia*, to allow me to see Miss Cavell, so as to have all necessary steps taken for her defence. No reply being received, the Legation, on September 10, reminded the German authorities of your letter.

The German reply, sent on September 12, was that I would not be allowed to see Miss Cavell, but that Mr. Braun, lawyer at the Brussels Court, was defending her and was already seeing the German authorities about the case.

I immediately asked Mr. Braun to come to see me at the Legation, which he did a few days later. He informed me that personal friends of Miss Cavell had asked him to defend her before the German Court, that he agreed to do so, but that owing to some unforeseen circumstances he was prevented from pleading before that Court, adding that he had asked Mr. Kirschen, a member of the Brussels Bar and his friend, to take up the case and plead for Miss Cavell, and that Mr. Kirschen had agreed to do so.

I therefore at once put myself in communication with Mr. Kirschen, who told me that Miss Cavell was prosecuted for having helped soldiers to cross the frontier. I asked him whether he had seen Miss Cavell and whether she had made any statement to him, and to my surprise found that the lawyers defending prisoners before the German Military Court were not allowed to see their clients before the trial, and were not shown any document of the prosecution. This, Mr. Kirschen said, was in accordance with the German military rules.

He added that the hearing of the trial of such cases was carried out very carefully, and that, in his opinion, although it was not possible to see the client before the trial, in fact, the trial itself developed so carefully and so slowly that it was generally possible to have a fair knowledge of all the facts and to present a good defence for the prisoner. This

would specially be the case for Miss Cavell, because the trial would be rather long, as she was prosecuted with 34 other prisoners.

I informed Mr. Kirschen of my intention to be present at the trial, so as to watch the case. He immediately dissuaded me from taking such attitude, which he said would cause a great prejudice to the prisoner, because the German Judges would resent it and feel it almost as an affront if I was appearing to exercise a kind of supervision on the trial. He thought that if the Germans would admit my presence, which was very doubtful, it would in any case cause prejudice to Miss Cavell.

Mr. Kirschen assured me over and over again that the Military Court of Brussels was always perfectly fair, and that there was not the slightest danger of any miscarriage of justice. He promised that he would keep me posted on all the developments which the case would take, and would report to me the exact charges that were brought against Miss Cavell and the facts concerning her that would be disclosed at the trial, so as to allow me to judge by myself about the merits of the case. He insisted that, of course, he would do all that was humanly possible to defend Miss Cavell to the best of his ability.

Three days before the trial took place Mr. Kirschen wrote me a few lines saying that the trial would be on the next Thursday, October 7. The

Legation at once sent him on October 5 a letter (copy No. 2) confirming in writing in the name of the Legation the arrangement that had been made between him and me. This letter was delivered to Mr. Kirschen by a messenger of the Legation.

The trial took two days, ending Friday, the 8th

On Saturday I was informed by an outsider that the trial had taken place, but that no judgment would be reached till a few days later.

Receiving no report from Mr. Kirschen, I tried to find him, but failed. I then sent him a note on Sunday, asking him to send his report to the Legation or call there on Monday morning at 8.30. At the same time I obtained from some other person present at the trial some information about what had occurred, and the following facts were disclosed to me :—

Miss Cavell was prosecuted for having helped English and French soldiers, as well as Belgian young men, to cross the frontier and to go over to England. She had admitted, by signing a statement before the day of the trial, and by public acknowledgment in Court, in the presence of all the other prisoners and the lawyers, that she was guilty of the charges brought against her, and she had acknowledged not only that she had helped these soldiers to cross the frontier, but also that some of them had thanked her in writing when arriving in England. This last admission made her case so

much the more serious, because if it only had been proved against her that she had helped the soldiers to traverse the Dutch frontier, and no proof was produced that those soldiers had reached a country at war with Germany, she could only have been sentenced for an attempt to commit the "crime" and not for the "crime" being duly accomplished. As the case stood, the sentence fixed by the German military law was a sentence of death.

Paragraph 58 of the German Military Code says :—

"Will be sentenced to death for treason any person, who with the intention of helping the hostile Power or of causing harm to the German or allied troops, is guilty of one of the crimes of paragraph 90 of the German Penal Code."

The case referred to in above-said paragraph 90 consists in " . . . conducting soldiers to the enemy . . . (viz., "dem Feinde Mannschaften zuführt").

The penalties above set forth apply, according to paragraph 160 of the German Code, in case of war, to foreigners as well as to Germans.

In her oral statement before the Court, Miss Cavell disclosed almost all the facts of the whole prosecution. She was questioned in German, an interpreter translating all the questions in French, with which language Miss Cavell was well acquainted. She spoke without trembling and showed a clear

mind. Often she added some greater precision to her previous depositions.

When she was asked why she had helped these soldiers to go to England, she replied that she thought that, if she had not done so, they would have been shot by the Germans, and that therefore she thought she only did her duty to her country in saving their lives.

The Military Public Prosecutor said that argument might be good for English soldiers, but did not apply to Belgian young men whom she induced to cross the frontier and who would have been perfectly free to remain in the country without danger to their lives.

Mr. Kirschen made a very good plea for Miss Cavell, using all arguments that could be brought in her favour before the Court.

The Military Public Prosecutor, however, asked the Court to pass a death sentence on Miss Cavell and eight other prisoners amongst the 35. The Court did not seem to agree, and the judgment was postponed. The person informing me said he thought that the Court would not go to the extreme limit.

Anyhow, after I had found out these facts (*viz.*, on Sunday evening) I called at the Political Division of the German Government in Belgium, and asked whether, now that the trial had taken place, permission would be granted to me to see Miss Cavell

in gaol, as surely there was no longer any object in refusing this permission. The German official, Mr. Conrad, said he would make the necessary inquiry at the Court and let me know later on. I also asked him that permission be granted to Mr. Gahan, the English clergyman, to see Miss Cavell.

At the same time we prepared at the Legation, to be ready for every eventuality, a petition for pardon, addressed to the Governor-General in Belgium, and a transmitting note addressed to Baron von der Lancken.

On Monday morning at 11 I called upon Mr. Conrad on the telephone from the Legation (as I had already done previously on several occasions when making inquiries about the case) asking what the Military Court had decided about Mr. Gahan and myself seeing Miss Cavell. He replied that Mr. Gahan could not see her, but that she could see any of the three Protestant clergymen attached to the prison ; and that I could not see her till the judgment was pronounced and signed, but that this would probably only take place in a day or two. I asked the German official to inform the Legation immediately after the passing of said judgment, so that I might see Miss Cavell at once, thinking, of course, that the Legation might, according to your intentions, take immediate steps for Miss Cavell's pardon if the judgment really was a sentence of death.

Very surprised to still receive no news from Mr. Kirschen, I then called at his house at 12.30, and was informed that he would not be there till about the end of the afternoon. I then called at 12.40 at the house of another lawyer interested in the case of a fellow-prisoner, and found that he also was out. In the afternoon, however, the latter lawyer called at my house, saying that in the morning he had heard from the German Commandantur that judgment would be passed only the next morning, viz., Tuesday morning. He said he feared that the Court would be very severe for all the prisoners.

Shortly after this lawyer left me, and while I was preparing a note about the case, at 8 p.m., I was privately and reliably informed that the judgment had been delivered at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, that Miss Cavell had been sentenced to death, and that she would be shot at 2 o'clock the next morning. I told my informer that I was extremely surprised at this, because the Legation had received no information yet, neither from the German authorities nor from Mr. Kirschen, but that the matter was too serious to run the smallest chance, and that, therefore, I would proceed immediately to the Legation to confer with your Excellency and take all possible steps to save Miss Cavell's life.

According to your Excellency's decision Mr.

Gibson and myself went, with the Spanish Minister, to see Baron von der Lancken, and the report of our interview and of our efforts to save Miss Cavell is given to you by Mr. Gibson.

This morning, Mr. Gahan, the English clergyman, called to see me and told me that he had seen Miss Cavell in her cell yesterday night at 10 o'clock, that he had given her the Holy Communion and had found her admirably strong and calm. I asked Mr. Gahan whether she had made any remarks about anything concerning the legal side of her case, and whether the confession which she made before the trial and in Court was in his opinion perfectly free and sincere, Mr. Gahan says that she told him she perfectly well knew what she had done, that according to the law, of course, she was guilty and had admitted her guilt, but that she was happy to die for her country.

G. DE LEVAL.

SIR EDWARD GREY'S REPLY.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the United States Ambassador, and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of his Excellency's Note of the 18th

inst. enclosing a copy of a dispatch from the United States Minister at Brussels respecting the execution of Miss Edith Cavell at that place.

Sir E. Grey is confident that the news of the execution of this noble Englishwoman will be received with horror and disgust, not only in the Allied States, but throughout the civilised world. Miss Cavell was not even charged with espionage, and the fact that she had nursed numbers of wounded German soldiers might have been regarded as a complete reason in itself for treating her with leniency.

The attitude of the German authorities is, if possible, rendered worse by the discreditable efforts successfully made by the Officials of the German Civil Administration at Brussels to conceal the fact that sentence had been passed and would be carried out immediately. These efforts were no doubt prompted by the determination to carry out the sentence before an appeal from the finding of the Court-martial could be made to a higher authority, and show in the clearest manner that the German authorities concerned were well aware that the carrying out of the sentence was not warranted by any consideration. Further comment on their proceedings would be superfluous.

In conclusion, Sir E. Grey would request Mr. Page to express to Mr. Whitlock and the staff of the United States Legation at Brussels the grateful

thanks of his Majesty's Government for their untiring efforts on Miss Cavell's behalf. He is fully satisfied that no stone was left unturned to secure for Miss Cavell a fair trial, and, when sentence had been pronounced, a mitigation thereof.

Sir E. Grey realises that Mr. Whitlock was placed in a very embarrassing position by the failure of the German authorities to inform him that the sentence had been passed and would be carried out at once. In order, therefore, to forestall any unjust criticism which might be made in this country he is publishing Mr. Whitlock's dispatch to Mr. Page without delay.

Foreign Office,
October 20, 1915.

THE SPANISH MINISTER'S EFFORTS.

FOREIGN OFFICE,
Oct. 20, 1915.

Immediate.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have received through the United States Ambassador at this Court a copy of a dispatch from

the United States Minister at Brussels respecting the execution at that place of Miss Edith Cavell, a British subject.

It appears from Mr. Whitlock's report that the Spanish Minister at Brussels accompanied Mr. Hugh Gibson, Secretary to the United States Legation at Brussels, on his visit to the German civil authorities at Brussels after the sentence passed on Miss Cavell became known, and did all he could to secure a commutation of the capital sentence.

His Majesty's Government much appreciate the efforts made by the Marquis de Villalobar on this occasion and the sentiments of humanity and chivalry which animated him, and they would be grateful if your Excellency would be good enough to so inform the Spanish Government.

I have the honour to be with the highest consideration,

Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant,

E. GREY.

His Excellency, Señor Don Alfonso Merry del Val.

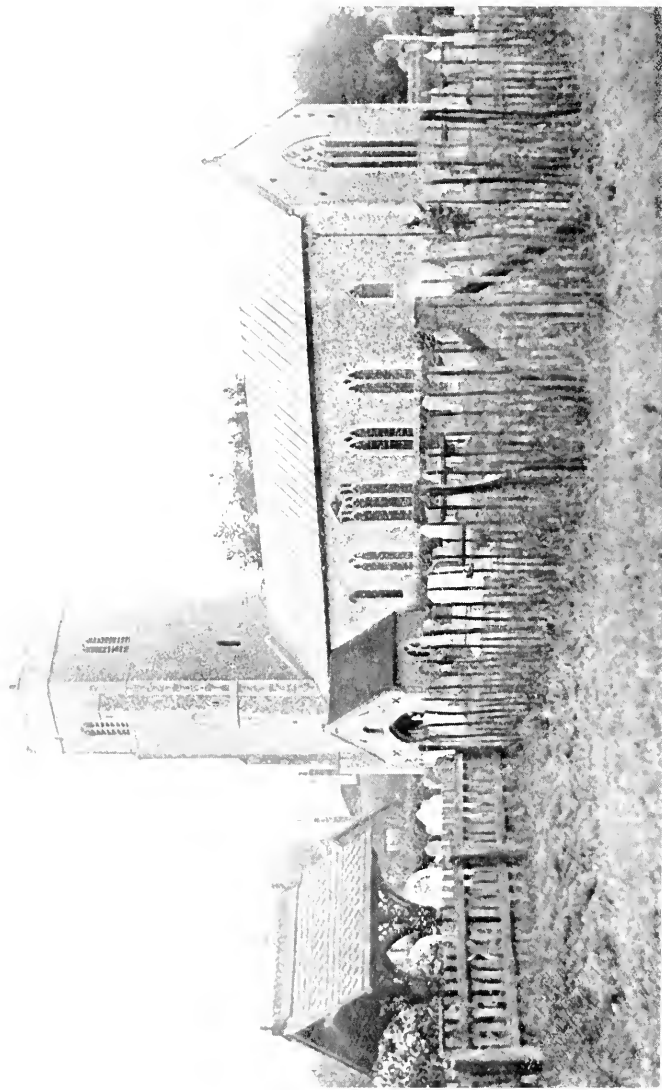


Photo. by Seain, Norwich

SWARDESTON CHURCH.

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TRIBUTES.

THE BISHOP OF NORWICH (DR. BERTRAM POLLOCK,
C.V.O.).

OTHERS will treat of the special place which Miss Edith Cavell holds in the history of the War, and in the hearts of all who have been touched by the story of her cruel death. "The whole world is the tomb of famous men," so spoke the great Athenian statesman in the most notable of all Greek speeches. There is no need of any special testimony to the heroism of Edith Cavell to be given by any of us who have been in touch with those who are dear and near to her. But we perhaps are in a better position to speak of two of the lessons which, as it appears to me, her life and death carry with them.

First, I would say that her story adds fresh point to the common rule that the great deeds of a life do not stand alone, that the way for them has been prepared by disciplined habits and in earlier years. We often have on our lips the proverb, "The boy

is father of the man." George Eliot, if I remember right, has something to say about this in "Romola."

Edith Cavell offers an illustration of this truth. The unselfishness which glorified her end was characteristic of her in her old home, in childhood, in girlhood, and ever onwards. The eldest of the family, she filled the unselfish place in regard to those who were younger, and in these smaller ways she was equipped for the fine work of her future life, and the greatness of her death.

There is, I think, encouragement to be found here for all who work on patiently and brightly in the quiet routine of home life. It must not be regarded as irksome or trivial if such a training in putting others first can bear so rich and glorious a fruit when its results are brought to a supreme test.

In the second place, I would say that the example of Edith Cavell testifies to the wonderful and lasting power of a good home.

It might seem that the simple life of a country parsonage stood strikingly apart from the dread scenes of war, in which she stands before us as a sweet but conspicuous figure. But it was in such a home, where she lived as an innocent, unselfish, devout, and pretty girl, that the foundations of that character were laid which has challenged the admiration of the world. Who can over-estimate the blessed influence of such a rearing?

It is not often that the work and self-sacrifice of the parson's family have occasion to receive public recognition. But in many a secluded village the poor, the bereaved, the sick, the aged, the penitent, have reason to bless the self-sacrifice, the devotion and the love of the clergyman and his wife and daughters, and to-day one such is honoured with a world-wide recognition. To her memory is offered the homage of those who can thank God that human nature, through the grace of God, can rise so high, even if such thanksgiving brings a condemnation and a chastening—yes, but a new hope, too, to their own lives, hitherto spent on a lower level.

It is not for me to draw aside the sacred veil of domestic privacy, but, to confirm what I have just written, I may say this, that when on All Saints' Day I found myself in the little home in Norwich where Miss Cavell year by year visited her aged mother, it was plain that one spirit belonged alike to mother and daughter, the spirit of the true Christian.

In such company it was a heart-stirring privilege to be allowed to use the beautiful words of the Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity: for Edith Cavell knows more fully now what God has prepared for them that love Him.

And apt indeed was the day's own message which assures us of the unbroken union of those who

are one in the mystical body of Christ, and encourages us to step along the narrow road marked by the footsteps of His blessed Saints, in whose bright ranks we placed her of whom our hearts were full.

THE BISHOP OF THETFORD (DR. BOWERS).

England, in these wonderful days of wrestling with the powers of evil, has been uplifted, time and again, by the selfless heroism of her sons—by their bravery, by their chivalry, and by their tenderness; and now it is hers to rejoice over the heroism of Edith Cavell, who has laid down her life for her friends.

Fearless, truthful, even to her own undoing (as men count these things), Edith Cavell faced her murderers, and passed, in the strength of Sacramental grace, from a world of strife and bloodshed to a world of peace and limitless possibilities of service.

If it is true—and of that there is no doubt—that righteousness exalteth a nation, then England is exalted by the life and death of this woman. She stands out, not as a great exception, but as a

type of hundreds of the women of England, who are giving themselves in a life of service to their God and their country to-day with such magnificent devotion to duty as, I think, the world has never before witnessed. As Edith Cavell laboured, so do they—with ever-growing scientific skill, with ever-growing tenderness and care, counting no sacrifice too great if, amidst a world weltering in war, they can ease the pain and cheer the hearts of those dear and gallant men, many of whom, but for their care, would have died alone, untended and in suffering unspeakable.

In the homes of the clergy, amid surroundings of refinement, stern simplicity, and ofttimes poverty, many of England's greatest leaders have been nurtured. It is this type of home that gave us Nelson, more than a hundred years ago, and now Edith Cavell. It was there she learned those lessons of duty to God and man which proved of such inestimable value and support to her all through her life as a nurse, whether in peace time or in war time, and afterwards enabled her, not only to bear with such wonderful patience those last weeks of captivity, but even to give thanks for them, and then to go, without fear, to her death.

What was it that gave her this courage and power? I venture to think it was the intense realisation of the Presence of God in ordinary daily life and duty. That is the thing of all others that

gives true strength to character. It is the spirit of the hymn she loved so well :

“ Abide with me ; fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide.”

“ May she rest in peace, and may Light perpetual shine upon her.”

THE LORD MAYOR OF NORWICH (DR. J. G.
GORDON-MUNN).

Edith Cavell's work in Belgium testifies to each of us that in quietude and confidence “ shall be your strength.” A true countrywoman of Nelson's, she just did what she deemed to be her duty to her country, and in quiet consciousness of that, found the strength that enabled her to meet with fortitude her unforgettable fate. Her example is, and for all time will be, one of Norfolk's most cherished legacies.

THE SHERIFF OF NORWICH (MR. FRANCIS
HORNOR).

In nowhere should the name of Nurse Cavell be held in greater reverence than in Norfolk, where she was born and spent her early life. Her nobility

of character, heroism, and self-renunciation of life itself, entitle her to a place beside that little band of Norfolk heroines which form an illustrious page in the history of our county.

MR. G. H. ROBERTS, M.P.

This war has familiarised the world with the fact that Germany honours no principle of international law, and pays no homage to either humanity or Christianity, whenever such are interpreted as hindering her aggressive purposes.

In choosing deliberately to worship force and violence, and to contemn sympathy and humility, she believes to have discovered the means to greatness and world-power. The colossal folly of this view must even now be dawning upon her more dispassionate thinkers. Certain is it that when the German menace has been destroyed irretrievably, the memory of Nurse Cavell will light for many the path to duty and human greatness.

This noble-minded daughter of East Anglia had dedicated her life to alleviating the suffering of others. As head of the Brussels Surgical Institute, she had trained many of her kind to nurse the sick and wounded. Her skill and care were bestowed

as freely on wounded Germans as on those of her own race. In truth, and in deed, she was a servant of humanity.

She committed no crime to tinge her cheek with shame. Her offence lay in having helped English and French soldiers, as well as Belgian young men, to cross the Dutch frontier, and thereby to escape to England. Too dignified to plead for mercy, and too pure to permit a lie to tarnish her lips, she disclosed every fact. It was her own evidence voluntarily rendered that constituted the main strength of the case for the prosecution. The defence she offered was that she thought that if she had not assisted the soldiers to go to England they would have been shot by the Germans. Had not her experience throughout the war given her real ground for this fear? Has an enemy ever treated more frightfully and ruthlessly those unfortunate enough to fall into its power? Let it be admitted that her acts contravened the German Military Code, and that some punishment might have been expected. Yet wherein except German autocracy would it occur to impose and carry out the death penalty? Surely detention for the remainder of the war would have expiated fully the technical offences with which Nurse Cavell was charged.

Even those intent on her murder seemed to glimpse the waves of horror and disgust that would roll over the world when news of the fell deed leaked

out. Miss Cavell's imprisonment and trial extended over a period of ten weeks. Yet judgment was delivered at five o'clock one afternoon, and she was shot in the early hours of the following morning. Discreditable efforts were made successfully by the German officials to hide the fact that sentence had been passed and would be carried out immediately. Meanwhile the United States Minister in Brussels had written to Baron von der Lancken : " I am too ill to present my request to you in person, but I appeal to the generosity of your heart to support it and save this unfortunate woman from death. Have pity on her ! " But the German official mind knows not pity. Sir Edward Grey, in a note to the United States Ambassador in London, states that haste was " no doubt prompted by the determination to carry out the sentence before an appeal from the finding of the court-martial could be made to a higher authority, and shows in the clearest manner that the German authorities concerned were well aware that the carrying out of the sentence was not warranted by any consideration." That statement merits the acquiescence of all who study the facts at their disposal.

Like many of the gallant fellows who have fallen in the fighting line, Miss Cavell met death with perfect calm and resignation. Something of the Spirit of Calvary pervaded her end. In view of

God and eternity she bade us "have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone." Only a sainted character could breathe such an injunction when about to become the victim of a barbarous power. Maybe, too, her exalted thought is beyond that of the average mortal. The manner of her destruction makes us bitter, and fills us with a hatred of the system that willed it. Yet we would not that our people imitate this hideous crime. All civilisation declares that the Germans have done themselves immeasurable hurt by their savagery in this war. We will not—cannot—descend to such depths of degradation. Miss Cavell's murder is a blot that cannot be erased. Generations hence decent-minded Germans will bow their heads in shame whenever it is recalled. The immediate effect at home will be that the chivalry of our manhood will be roused to rid the world of the tyranny that has culminated in this atrocity and to conquer the right to pass on a heritage of honour, justice, and lasting peace.

CANON F. J. MEYRICK (VICAR OF ST. PETER
MANCROFT, NORWICH).

“ Her feet have touched the meadows,
And left the daisies rosy.”

We are taught that the footprints of every good woman can do that.

Not long ago misguided people were trampling underfoot many worthy flowers of womanhood. These flowers have survived. The daisies are rosier than ever.

We see Nurse Cavell in all her tenderness bound—self-bound—not to some gate or railing, but to the bedside of dying men. The cords that bind her are the cords of womanhood. Love suffereth long and is kind to friend and foe.

She is splendidly frank at her trial. Love rejoiceth in the truth. She is speaking not of rights, but of duties. In a land of destruction she alone has destroyed nothing ; she has only saved life. She tells a judge, who cannot understand, that a woman, a nurse, cannot be a traitor to the highest impulses. “ She must needs love the highest when she sees it.”

She waits calmly for death. She knows no bitterness : she is in charity with all men. She can forgive a nation that, being for the time demoniac, knows not what it does. Here is perfect

charity—but a charity that has a clear vision. The pure in heart, the perfectly disinterested, can see Truth. She knows that Patriotism is not enough. She sees what patriots will do—when their patriotism is fanned by hymns of hate. She must fall back on something greater than Patriotism, and on some One stronger than an Emperor, and so she kneels for her last Communion.

“Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.”

Then she goes out to die. Here is Victory—the Victory of Love, which must at times surrender life itself.

“Heaven’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.”

* * * * *

“Her feet have touched the meadows,
And left the daisies rosy.”

Her blood has touched the battlefield of Flanders. It has blotted it with shame. One day the wrath of broken Germany may, like Lady Macbeth, well haunt the scene of murder: “Out, damned spot, out I say . . . here’s the smell of blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten” the murder-spot where in the dead of night a lonely woman was legally and pitilessly done to death.

But her blood has also touched the field to consecrate it—to re-consecrate it, for the strength of man and the blood of men have already made it holy—to set it apart for all time as a home of that charity and tenderness that rough men dream of and that women die for.

Her blood has touched the meadows and left the land rich with the promise of a great harvest.

* * * * *

“Love suffereth long and is kind ; love envieth not . . . seeketh not its own—rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things . . . Love never faileth.”

CANON DRAKE (RECTOR OF ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, NORWICH).

The news of the brutal murder—it can scarcely be called even a “judicial” murder—of Nurse Cavell at once aroused a veritable storm of passionate indignation throughout our country and throughout the whole civilised Christian world. It was not that many others have not been done to death by the Germans ; it was not that others—priests, nuns, innocent civilians in Belgium and

France—have not been brutally murdered in this war, under circumstances that made their death a real martyrdom for faith and country and duty ; but there were circumstances about Nurse Cavell's heroic and pathetic end that made her passing at once the type of all womanly devotion, intrepidly carried to the supreme sacrifice, and of that strange, appalling phenomenon, the German forgetfulness—or rather, deliberate setting aside—of all humane considerations that, even in the midst of a bloody and internecine conflict, have been wont to spread a benign influence and soften somewhat the horrors of warfare.

Neither her sex, which surely ought to have aroused some chivalrous feelings in the hearts of her captors, nor her profession as a nurse—one of those who in times of war are the angels of the battlefield and the hospital ; nor the devotion with which she had given her services to the solace and healing of wounded German soldiers—none of these things availed to stay the hand of those hard men who had determined that she should die, nor could prevent the carrying out in most indecent haste, in the dead of night, in some secret place, of the iniquitous sentence. When other horrors of this war have receded into a merciful oblivion, the story of Edith Cavell will stand out, unforgotten and unforgettable. For generations to come her story will be told as an inspiring example of noble

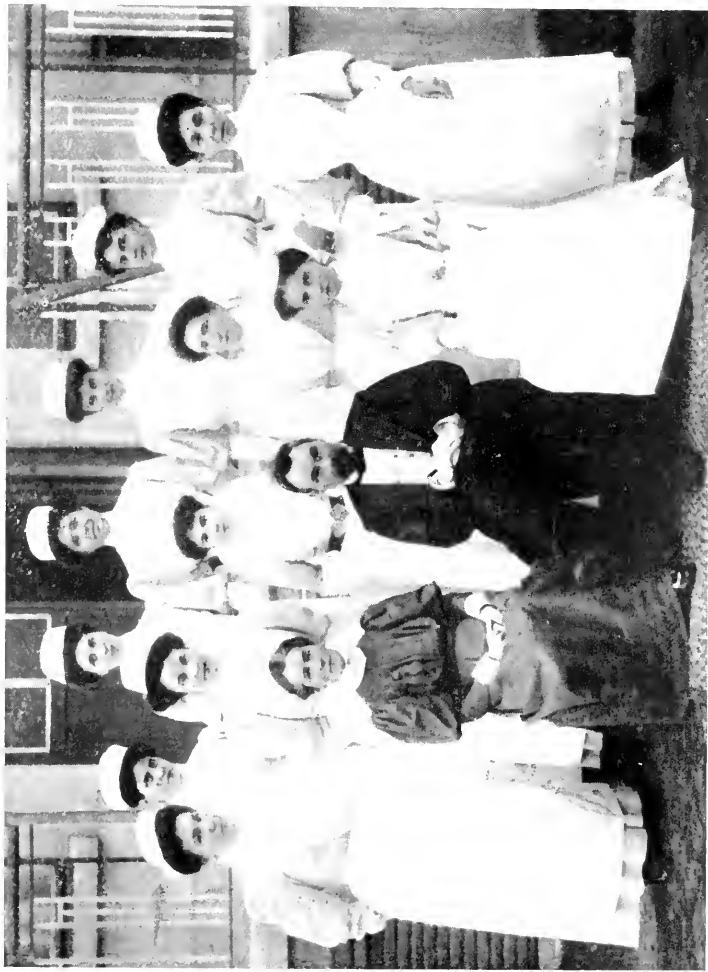
English womanhood ; of one who knew how to live and how to die—glad, as she said herself at the end, to give her life for her country in the just and sacred cause of humanity and right. “Pity,” said Nietzsche, “is a waste of feeling, a moral parasite which is injurious to health. Pity does not depend upon maxims, but on emotions. Pity thwarts the law of development, which is the law of selection.” Such is the philosophy upon which the German mind has been fed: the death of Edith Cavell shows forth pre-eminently the fruits of such teaching. We have no doubt upon whom the benediction has fallen of Him Who said, “Blessed are the merciful” ; not upon the “super-men” who did her to death, but upon the gentle woman whose life was given to works of mercy, and who died because for no fear nor threat would she hold her hand from well-doing.

Surely her blood will cry out to the men of her race, summoning them with irresistible appeal, not to mere vengeance, but to the putting down, once for all, of those who have erected inhuman brutality into a creed of political and social conduct.

REV. W. GRIFFITH JENKINS (MINISTER OF PRINCES'
STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, NORWICH.

When we read the story of that tragic horror of Prussian militarism, our first sentiment was the violence of indignation—and it is well that a shock of moral anger should have run through the world. And then came the thrill of admiration. Amid all the great deeds of these days was anything quite so noble as that fearless sacrifice? But neither is enough. For that sublime heroism something deeper and higher is needed. We must make it sacramental. No memorial to Edith Cavell would be fitting that did not bring us face to face with the eternal things and make us hear them call.

How deeply she has stirred the world! She has been compared with the greatest of heroines. Her service has been ranked with that of Elizabeth Fry and of John Brown, who, as he mounted the gallows, stooped to kiss the child of the negro he died to emancipate. Is our perspective right? Can our homage be justified? Why are we so moved? Certainly there is more here than her chivalrous befriending of hard-driven soldiers. First of all, she has symbolised the heroism of woman as revealed in the war, as well as the peril of womanhood from any triumph of Prussianism. During these evil days the world has seen the unselfishness and heroic service of woman as perhaps never



[By kind permission of the "Graphic,"

MISS CAVELL AND PROBATIONERS AT THE BRUSSELS NURSING SCHOOL.

before. She personified that. It was no accidental part of her glory that she was a nurse. And so, in honouring her memory, the world pays tribute to those countless sisters of hers who have lit the red lamp of mercy through all the horrors of this time. And then has she not revealed through her patient suffering, the malignancy of that thing against which the world is in arms? Not until it is destroyed can the world have rest.

Furthermore, she has greatly purified our patriotism. Needless to say, she has stirred it to the depths. Out of her martyrdom comes a veritable new army to confront her enemies and ours. But she has done more than awaken it; she has cleansed it. And who shall say it was not needed? She has taught us that our patriotism must be examined in the light of something Higher. This is where Germany has struck her most subtle blow at the world. Our patriotism needs to be something other than German patriotism. 'Tis true we need a hot anger that amounts to pain; an indignation that burns the soul. But all the time we need to see the pitiableness of all evil. Merely to hate is to be overcome of evil. We cannot conquer German militarism by drinking of its spirit. God forbid that our love of England should be Prussianised! Nurse Cavell has taught us more clearly than any modern soul how to front our enemies.

But she has done more yet. In the very hour of

her death she has rebeckoned us to the Eternal things. "Patriotism is not enough!" Did we not need to be reminded of just that? During these days we have discovered a new relevancy in the Old Testament, with its stern morality of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Yet we need to remember the Old Testament cannot save the world. The one Hope of humanity is the Gospel of the Cross. She has proclaimed it to the world. God, Christ, Immortality, the Soul—it is these that count most! Thank God for the light of her victory in the darkest hour!

REV. J. P. GLEN (MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH, NORWICH).

Little did Edith Cavell in her day-dreams in a Norfolk vicarage foresee the tragedy with which her life would end, and no idea of the imperishable halo with which her name would be encircled could possibly then have entered into her mind. And yet we believe the line of life can be traced back visibly to those days. In the quiet of her father's parish, in her saintly home, she became possessed of the unalterable conviction that the unseen is the eternal. She followed the gleam. She endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.

Her heroism has thrilled the world. The secret of it was, she had the spirit of Him Who saved others, Who did not save Himself. Was it not given to her

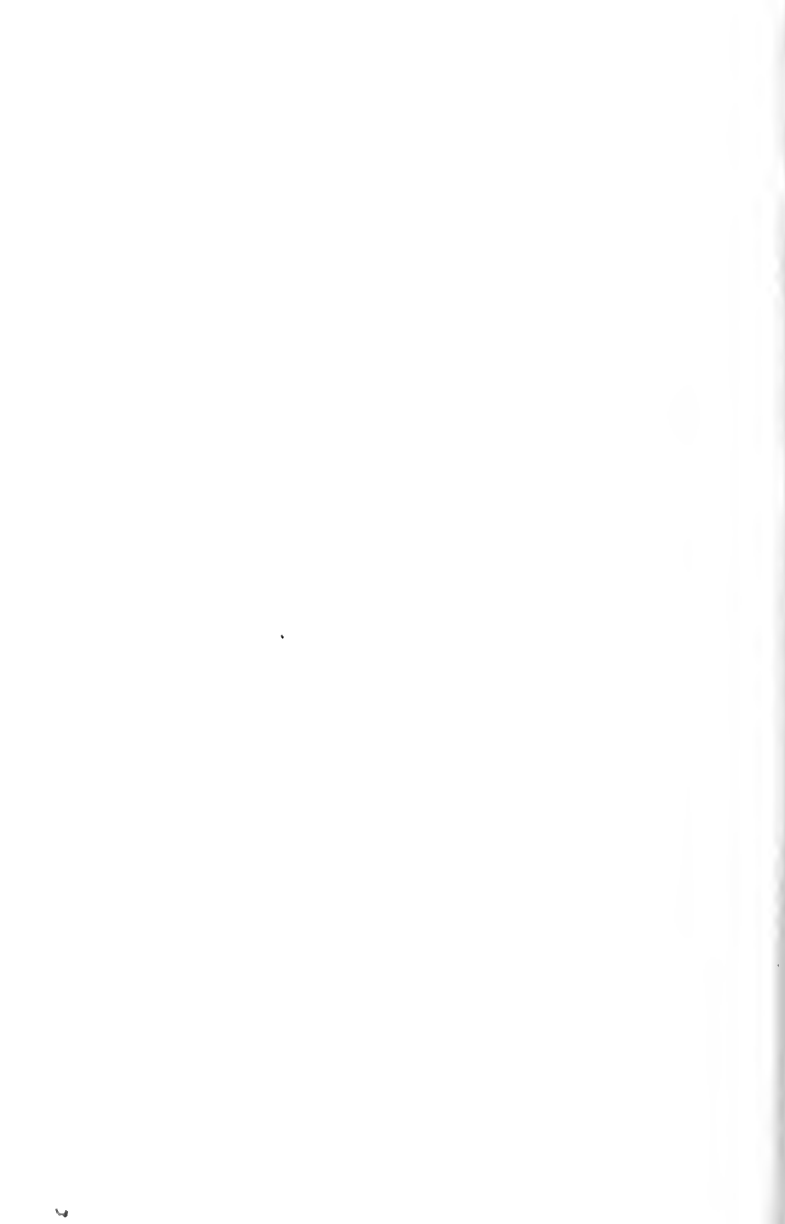
To follow near by
The Heavenly Brother, living to heal and save,
Achieving rescue, sacrifice how dearly?

In her calling as a nurse she went about continually doing good—even to her enemies. And when it was but too plain that there was no mercy at their hands she spoke kindly of them, cherishing no hatred or bitterness. She passed into the silence with the spirit of forgiveness in her soul. And in some ways not unlike our Lord's was her trial. No plea could touch the hard hearts of those German officers. They might have admired her patriotism, for love to their Fatherland is their proudest boast. The fact that she was a woman whose life had been spent in the ministry of healing, who had tended their wounded, and whose crime was the following of this impulse of mercy to humanity, might have aroused their chivalry. But they were callous. Secretly and in haste, while it was yet dark, the sentence was carried out in that Brussels prison—grim, cold, forbidding. But when Edith Cavell passed away the day dawned on another of the world's shrines. Another name was added to the world's heroines.

Why is it that this death has roused men even more than the atrocities of Belgium and the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the soul of man was moved to the depths by these tragedies? It is because her name has become symbolic of the cause of liberty. Her death lit up in a flash the awful abyss of the militarism that would rule the world. The two ideals were confronted in that prison in Brussels, and in that gentle woman's death militarism was defeated—the soul is imperishable. And the world, anxious over the too-prolonged success of the enemy, took courage and breathed again. The saddest feature of it all is that the German nation “has not found one spark of conscience from which to utter one word of protest.” And we are tempted to think harshly, but we are saved as we recall the lofty and pure patriotism of the woman who died for her country without any spark of hatred or bitterness to her enemies. Like a clarion, her death calls us in these days of our country's need to its service.

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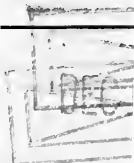


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